Patamyar Shwe Oo Min Meditation Center (Mingalardon, Kontalabaung village)

The great Shwe Oo Min meditation center is situated in the Yangon district, Mingalardon Township, Kontalabaung village, Aung-mye-thar-yar Street. I have arrived there from a remote area. Over the years Shwe Oo Min meditation center has expanded a lot – it now has a good number of monastic buildings. The large dwelling for the abbot, a *tipiṭakadhara* (i.e. one who has memorized the entire Pāli scripture of Theravādins) has a modern, majestic and exquisite design that arouses faith and joy in the lay supporters.

Although I've practiced various meditation techniques for about eight years, this is the first time that I've visited the Shwe Oo Min meditation center. In the monastery there are many foreign monks, nuns and yogis, as well as local monks, nuns and yogis. The pleasant, neat and clean dormitories, rooms and buildings are very comfortable. There is also a good number of dwelling places for women.

The conscientious way, in which the food and drinks are prepared and presented, is quite different from other meditation centers. The donors with their menus of different combinations of rice and curries are thoroughly scheduled. The majority of the donors are from abroad.

As it is a meditation center riddled with paths for walking meditation, one happens to be continuously mindful while coming or going.

The meditation method is also extremely interesting. Observing an object, one works in order to decrease greed, hatred and ignorance in one's mind. It is a method of watching one's mind. One watches his/her six senses with one's knowledge again and again. The main thing is to stay increasing and applying one's mindfulness in all the four postures – standing, sitting, lying and walking. Whenever one is talking or fulfilling one's duties, one should do so applying mindfulness.

I have come to appreciate this extraordinary method. The practice here at Shwe Oo Min meditation center is quite special. The reports of meditation expressed by yogis during interviews are truly remarkable. Because one may not know the method, in the beginning one should learn the essence of the teachings, the peaceful Dhamma from the (audio and video) recordings of the master, of the master's discourses and one's practice.

Does greed, ignorance, hatred, jealousy or stinginess arise? Does conceit arise? One must investigate, analyze and know for oneself. And I myself reflect on the gradual changes – "Isn't there anything? Is there nothing?"

During the sitting meditation one has to relax one's mental rigidness as well as one's bodily stiffness. Know the phenomenon of sitting, know the phenomenon of touching, know the phenomenon of seeing, know the fact of hearing, know the movements in one's body and know the coolness of the weather condition. One stays aware of all states of one's mind. Although (in the beginning) one may have to mentally label the phenomena of one's mind, after gaining a momentum, when one's concentration is improved, sitting and watching as much as one can, one may perceive freshness and ease. Then, if the concentration decreases, balance your concentration - do not become affected. Although it may not be possible at first to meditate with opened eyes, after some time opening them during the meditation may be pleasant.

During walking meditation one is aware of seeing, movements of the body, heat and cold, standing or stopping and turning – applying one's attention, one is aware. If one's walking is quick or

slow, one is aware of it. One should pay attention while walking according to one's level of concentration – do not indulge in idleness.

When one sees food and drink – one should look being aware of the seeing itself. As for me, before I start eating, I reflect: "Throughout the cycle of births and deaths I've had innumerable number of relatives, whose body is now back in earth. Thus (ultimately said) I happen to eat and drink remnants of my relatives' bodies – and thus I should eat just enough to maintain stability of my life and body." I have the habit of eating also after reflecting on uninterrupted, continuous change of mental states: "Isn't there permanence? Is there unsatisfactoriness? Isn't there any control? All the conditioned phenomena are simply ephemeral, unsatisfactory and uncontrollable. They are just impermanent, subject to the Truth of Suffering."

While eating, one is aware of seeing, hearing, touching, thinking, coolness from the ceiling fan, making a step, taking, chewing and swallowing. Although not labeling mentally, one must remind oneself to be aware of everything continuously. Noticing a pause must be also done just that way.

For the meditators of Shwe Oo Min meditation center, the phenomena of greed, hatred, ignorance, jealousy and stinginess decrease. Even when these mental states occur, one reminds oneself to be aware of their occurrence. One's mind thus attains peace and joy.

Although I often loose energy, finally I started to gain confidence in myself. With that comes the right determination.

I am a person, who always develops mindfulness of death: "My life is not certain. My death is certain. My life simply ends with death. I must die." Indeed, in the little period before I die, I have to hang on, diligently develop and strive, according to the good method of practice that leads to Nibbāna, namely the method of Shwe Oo Min meditation center.

This is the right meditation center, where yogis from abroad as well as local yogis come unceasingly to zealously develop in meditation.

Wishing the master success in his missionary activities abroad as well as in Myanmar, with well-wishing and loving-kindness I dedicate this article in gratitude to the master himself.

Ma Vīra (Thoung Zhay)